



December 31, 2017

## **FIJI NEEDS SOUND AND SENSIBLE LEADERSHIP: NFP**

The governance of Fiji needs to take a new direction in 2018 for all our citizens to witness genuine parliamentary democracy and full restoration of fundamental human rights and freedoms that are prerequisites for real social, political and economic advancement of our nation.

To ignore fundamental problems that plague our nation would be doing so at our own peril. In Fiji, calling everyone Fijians and saying they enjoy common and equal citizenry doesn't guarantee fundamental freedoms like freedom of speech, freedom of association, worker rights, political rights, permanent tenure of employment particularly in the civil service, and freedom of the media.

Common and equal citizenry also does not guarantee job opportunities based on meritocracy, rendering common and equal citizenry meaningless. It does not guarantee decent and meaningful living wage. It does not guarantee timely and efficient delivery of medical services and dispensation of the required medicine. It does not guarantee a reduction in cost of living.

There are many other challenges we face as a community and as a nation that can only be overcome through genuine unity, bipartisanship and sound and sensible leadership.

This is what the NFP will do in 2018, which is going to be a defining and momentous year for Fiji. The decisions we make and the actions we take collectively as a unified harmonious force will have a profound effect on all of us and our future generations.

A New Year is naturally the culmination of the festive season. It is a time of rejoicing, reflection, making resolutions and welcoming the New Year with celebrations in a spirit of togetherness and harmony.

It is also a time to remember the sick and the infirm, the less fortunate and all those unable to celebrate New Year with the same passion and vigour as others due to various reasons, particularly the locked-out workers of Air Terminal Services who are 49% shareholders in the company.

Together with their families and children, they spent Christmas as well as are spending New Year in tents outside a company they co-own with Government.

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All correspondence should be addressed to the general secretary

At the same time, the Prime Minister's absolute silence on an issue that has dragged on for over two weeks, is shocking. Any leader of a nation should be concerned about an impasse that is not only affecting workers but their children and families.

The best start to the New Year would be for the Prime Minister to intervene and order ATS Board and Management to allow the workers who are shareholders to freely return to work without loss of pay and benefits and also order an independent inquiry in the operations of ATS.

As a party born out of the struggle for dignity and justice of all our people 54 years ago, the NFP will continue the struggle for our beloved nation to once again become a beacon of hope and trust.

Change is coming. Change is inevitable.

We wish you a happy, healthy, prosperous and blessed 2018.



**Professor Biman Prasad**  
**NFP Leader**